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# THE RED CROSS

IN CHARGE OF

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For the first time since the signing of the armistice, the National Committee on Red Cross Nursing Service met at National Headquarters, December 9 and 10 to discuss the future policies of the Nursing Service.

In view of the momentous changes which have taken place within the past year,—the signing of the armistice, the readjustment of the service from the height of its war speed, to the equally important needs of peace, the loss of Miss Delano overseas, and the problems of increasing complexity which are arising,—this meeting brought to Washington a keenly interested representation of the nursing organizations of the country: M. Adelaide Nutting, Anna C. Maxwell, and Ella P. Crandall, New York; Susan C. Francis, Philadelphia; Grace O'Bryan, Boston; Sophia F. Palmer, Rochester, N. Y.; Mary E. Gladwin, Akron, O.; Jane E. Nash, Baltimore; and from Washington representatives of the Surgeons General of the Army, the Navy, the U. S. Public Health Service and the Red Cross attended. Ruth Wheeler, Baltimore, represented the Red Cross committee on Dietitians' Service.

After the election of Miss Noyes and Miss Deans as temporary chairman and secretary, Dr. Livingston Farrand, chairman of the executive committee of the American Red Cross, welcomed the members of the National Committee. "In looking toward the future," he stated, "we have come to realize that without health, we can really have little else. The kernel of our Red Cross program centers in the nurse whom you represent. She becomes the central factor of the activities which we contemplate, and to operate as an organization interested in the promotion of national health, the Red Cross stands in need of the soundest advice, the wisest counsel which you can give. We are depending on you, and are grateful to you for the time and the thought which you have given in coming to advise us regarding our future program."

In looking toward the New Year, the National Committee first expressed in the following resolution its deep appreciation of the work of American nurses during the war,—the best warrant possible for the success of the new program:

The National Committee on Red Cross Nursing Service at this, its first meeting held since the signing of the armistice, wishes to record its deep

appreciation of the superb response of the nurses of America to the great demands made upon them during the recent war, in which they enrolled in larger numbers than eventually were used. It finds no words adequate to convey to them its grateful recognition of their untiring devotion to duty, of the high quality of their work and of their heroic endurance of the unparalleled difficulties under which that work was carried on. It feels that in all essentials they have, as a body, upheld the highest traditions of nursing. The Committee takes pride in them and their achievements and asks that this minute be spread upon the records of the Committee.

The following resolutions were also drawn up and presented by the temporary chairman to the General Board of the American Red Cross meeting December 10, which in turn voted that this minute be amended to include the General Board as well:

WHEREAS in the death of Miss Jane A. Delano, first Chairman of the National Committee on Red Cross Nursing Service, and Director of the Department of Nursing of the American Red Cross, on April 15, 1919, in line of duty at Savenay, France, the National Committee on Red Cross Nursing Service representing the Nurses of America, suffered an irreparable loss; and

WHEREAS Miss Delano in her dual position of Chairman of the National Committee and Second Superintendent of the Army Nurse Corps, was instrumental in making the Red Cross Nursing Service the Reserve of the Army and later the Navy Corps; and

WHEREAS during the ten years in which she served the Red Cross as a full-time volunteer, by reason of her clear vision, her genius for organization, her gracious leadership of the nurses of America, and her intense patriotism, the Red Cross was able to meet the nursing needs both of the military service and its own work in this country and overseas, in supplying over twenty thousand graduate nurses for service during the period of the war;

BE IT HERE RESOLVED that we, the National Committee on Red Cross Nursing Service, meeting for the first time since the death of Miss Delano, do herewith record our deep appreciation of her life and of the service which she rendered to the nurses of America, to the Red Cross, and to the entire world.

After a report of the work of the Red Cross Nursing Service overseas which now has units in France, the Balkans, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Greece and Siberia, the National Committee turned its attention to the vast program of health conservation and education which the Red Cross Department of Nursing is undertaking in the United States. Of especial interest were the reports of the Directors of the Red Cross Bureaus of the Department of Nursing.

Elizabeth G. Fox, Director of the Bureau of Public Health Nursing, outlined the guiding principles of the public health nursing program of the Red Cross:

"We try not to supplant or to compete with, but *to supplement* the work of other agencies. Believing that public health nursing should ultimately become a public function, we feel that every effort should be directed toward assisting the State governments to build

up adequate nursing systems. We also believe that the Red Cross Public Health Nursing Service should not be a specialized service, but wherever possible should include all of the essential branches of public health nursing, including the care of the sick.

"To develop these policies, our plan of action was to interest Red Cross chapters in existing public health nursing agencies, and, where none existed, to encourage them to establish such a service in accordance with the State plan and with the intention of transferring the responsibility to the community just as soon as the community itself could be prepared to take it. After decentralization of the work to the Divisions, which involved the appointment of Division Directors of Public Health Nursing, instructions for these offices and for the chapters were prepared, and the distribution of information and literature to the general public.

"Our problems have been manifold. The first and perhaps the most difficult one was to work out plans of coöperation with the State Departments of Health and with the State Tuberculosis Associations. Definite working agreements, alike in no two cases, have now been effected in fifteen States, and many others are pending. We hope soon to develop an equally satisfactory plan with the State Tuberculosis Associations.

"A second problem confronting us was the securing of an adequate staff to carry on our work. Our only resources to meet the tremendous demand were the public health nurses returning from foreign service, the nurses then taking courses in public health nursing, and the few on city staffs who were sufficiently prepared and who were desirous of going on into independent service. On March 1, 1919, we had 99 nurses in field service for this Bureau; seven months later we had 316 nurses in our service. Many other nurses are preparing for positions, thanks to the Red Cross scholarship and loan funds, of which 254 National and 155 Chapter scholarships have been granted.

"Side by side with this work to maintain a high standard of public health nursing, we have also undertaken plans through which to help educate our Chapters, our nurses and the general public in the field of public health nursing. We now look to problems of equal importance and difficulty which arise in the future, but out of our year's work is emerging a structure which seems sufficiently substantial to give us assurance of real accomplishment and value."

Following the report given by Miss Fox, Harriette S. Douglas, Director, Bureau of Home Hygiene and Care of the Sick, outlined what is now being done in that department. "Our instruction," she stated, "is progressing by leaps and bounds all over the country. We

now have three authorized courses: First, the regular certified course of fifteen lessons which is taught by an enrolled Red Cross nurse instructor; second, the adapted course which allows a teacher of physiology, biology, domestic science or other especially qualified women to present the non-technical part of the course, a Red Cross nurse instructor presenting that which pertains to nursing procedure; third, the course, based on practical demonstrations and given by a nurse instructor, which is offered to women and girls most interested in practical phases of the instruction. This course is of particular value to foreign women who do not desire the examinations.

"From 1914 to November 1, 1919, 100,000 women and girls in all parts of the United States, and in many of our Insular possessions, have received this instruction in the basic principles of home-making. We now have 1,702 active instructors in the various divisions who are offering the courses, in any of its three forms, to almost every type of woman in this 'melting pot' of the United States—Polish, Slavic, Bohemian, Indian, Spanish, Italian, Swedish, etc., college girls, housewives, mothers, girl scouts, business women, and even some men, are taking the course. In a Georgia town the white women report that since their negro house-maids have been encouraged to take the instruction, there has been a wonderful improvement, not only in the way their food has been cooked and served, but also in household sanitation and hygiene."

Miss Douglas then outlined the plans of the Bureau for developing additional educational literature, charts, etc., and concluded by emphasizing the foundation for a better public health which is being laid in these courses.

The Red Cross text-book in Home Dietetics, which is now being revised so as to teach the principles of food values and proper nutrition in so simple a form as to be adaptable to the everyday needs of the household, will play a very material part in the health education of the Department of Nursing. "Although the Red Cross Bureau of Dietitians' Service will continue to act as a reserve for the Army, the Navy and the U. S. Public Health Service," stated Margaret Sawyer, the Director, "its main activity will be to turn its attention to the specialized problem of food as it relates to health, and to coöperate, in accordance with Red Cross policies, with the agencies already existing in this field. At the present time, the States Relation Service of the Department of Agriculture which operates in the field through Home Demonstration Agents, has been forced to reduce its personnel greatly because of the decrease in appropriations. It has been in the field for the past twenty years, and has been studying the problems of Extension, simultaneously equipping laboratories where splendid

research in Home Economics is being made, and literature developed. The Red Cross on the other hand has the highly efficient decentralized organization which enables it to reach out to the most distant little town and rural community; it also has about 2,400 Home Economics women enrolled in its Bureau of Dietitians' Service, many of whom are qualified to act as instructors in the prospective course in Home Dietetics.

"To effect coöperation with State Extension Service, the Red Cross is placing a Home Economics woman in each Division office as Director of the Bureau of Dietitian Service, whose professional training is similar to that of the State Leaders of Home Economics Extension in the various states. This Director will aim to coördinate the Red Cross work with that of the Extension Service, rather than to work independently as an isolated unit. Directors of this Bureau have now been placed in five divisions. Thus with active coöperation between the Department of Agriculture and the Red Cross at Washington, such as has been developed in preparing the new class outlines between the Division Directors of the Bureau of Dietetics and the Extension Directors of the States, and between the Home Demonstration Agents and the Red Cross instructors in Home Dietetics in the field, the Red Cross hopes to accomplish a very definite and valuable piece of educational work in the broad field of nutrition."

One of the most generally discussed subjects of the National Committee meeting centered about the return of the Red Cross capes issued to all nurses in military service. As has been stated before, these capes were only loaned to the nurses for the period of the war. Now report comes to National Headquarters that they are being worn with semi-uniform or civilian dress, and that they are being carelessly left here and there where any passer-by may take them and wear them to the discredit of the service they represent. These capes have become traditional with the highest ideals of *active Red Cross nursing service*, and for nurses who are now discharged to wear them in private and institutional duty, robs them of this fine sentimental value. The National Committee makes a last appeal to the honesty of American nurses to return these capes to the Director of the Department of Nursing in all Red Cross Divisions.